

Name: Peishan Shieh

Title: National Park Transportation Scholar

Duration: One year—from July 2, 2003 through July 1, 2004

Park assigned: Fort Clatsop National Memorial, Astoria, Oregon

Final Report

Project summary:

The Fort Clatsop National Memorial (FOCL) project called for a regional transit system that would connect the local communities to the park, specifically from the regional designated parking lots to the newly constructed summer-park entrance named Netul Landing (NL). From NL, an intra-park shuttle that travels 1.25 miles would ferry visitors to the fort replica was also proposed. The intra-park shuttle was designed to work in conjunction with a 20-minute-interval entry system to the fort replica.

The timed entry system requires visitors to purchase tickets in advance in order to visit FOCL during the peak season—from mid-June through Labor Day. With timed tickets in hand, all visitors will board the intra-park shuttle from NL to the replica fort. The rationale for implementing the ticketing system is to pro-actively manage the visitor's flow to this micro-sized national park, which has gained lots of attention due to the 2004-2006 Lewis and Clark bicentennial commemoration.

Project objectives:

Sunset Empire Transportation District (SETD) is the operator of a viable transit system serving the Clatsop county, Oregon where the park is located. The existing transit service provides alternative transportation to the local residents. FOCL formed a partnership with SETD by entering into an inter-agency agreement for SETD to operate both the region-to-NL transit system and the intra-park shuttle system. The new systems are to be operated when the ticketing system is in place. In other words, these systems are catered towards the visitors to FOCL, not local commuters. FOCL funds the operation costs of the new systems, while SETD is in charge of the operations.

To determine the level of transit service for the park, a projection for the number of visitors during the peak summer season had to be obtained first. Because there is no transportation funding appropriated by the National Park Service, FOCL has to fund the transit service by charging each visitor a transportation fee. Though visitation calculations by the NPS Public Use Statistics Office were available, based on my observation, the numbers were grossly inflated. The visitation estimate for summer 2004 has to be as realistic as possible since FOCL is to bear the full operation costs of the new transit service.

The overall goal of providing alternative transportation to FOCL is two-fold: to protect this unique national treasure by alleviating the air and noise pollution of its surroundings, and to reduce traffic congestion and parking problems in the region. My role as a transportation scholar was to make sure that the new routes and the level of the transit service were appropriate for the demand of park visitors, and that the system was user-friendly so that it encourages transit usage. However, there is an underlying objective that FOCL, its partner and the local communities were trying to achieve as well, i.e. promote the local economy. Therefore, marketing efforts played an important role in this project.

Work completed:

To meet the project objectives, the following tasks were performed.

1. Visitation projection

- A visitor sign-in sheet created to collect data was put in place starting July 4, 2003, and the data collection is still on going.
- A volunteer was recruited to enter the data collected into an ACCESS format database.
- The visitation number for summer 2003 was derived from the sign-in sheets, and the number for summer 2004 was projected.
- Further analysis was performed to help identify where visitors are most likely to use the transit service so routes can match the user demand.

2. Setting up the reservation/ticketing system

- Negotiated the reservation/ticketing system contract with the National Park Reservation Center contractor.
- Oversaw the operations of the reservation/ticketing system.
- Participated in the process of determining the fee for the timed entry ticket, which includes the transportation fee, the reservation contractor's fee, and the park entrance fee.
- Helped determine the fee structure of the reservation/ticketing system—adult fare, youth fare, and the fare for park-pass holders.
- Designed the two types of timed entry tickets—the commemorative ticket and the e-ticket.

3. Transit system coordination

- Worked with SETD to determine how the timed entry ticket works in conjunction with the transit service. As a result, the timed ticket also serves as a 3-day bus pass.
- Determined the level of transit service FOCL can afford.
- Proposed new regional bus routes and schedules to SETD.
- Proposed the intra-park shuttle schedule to SETD.
- Provided content for the bus-shelter information display panels, installed at major park and ride lots from Ilwaco, WA to Cannon Beach, OR.
- Coordinated the installation of the information display panels with other partners in the region—Pacific Transit System (Pacific County, WA), Port of Ilwaco (Ilwaco, WA), City of Cannon Beach (OR), Oregon Department of Transportation, and Washington Department of Transportation.
- Contributed to the content for the highway advisory radio and variable message signs.

4. Marketing and Information dissemination

- Trained park staff to handle questions regarding the new transit system and the ticketing system.
- Trained the SETD bus drivers about the ticketing system.
- Lined up ten ticketing outlets that provide free ticketing service to the park visitors.
- Informed local business owners about the new systems at FOCL.
- Trained visitor service agents at the ticketing outlets.
- Compiled a list of frequently asked questions and a quick reference sheet about the ticketing and the transit system for dissemination on the FOCL web site and at training workshops.
- Created a step-by-step instruction for the reservation/ticketing system.

Duties performed beyond the scope of work:

1. Negotiated a reservation contract for FOCL, and oversaw its operations.

2. Served as a liaison for a marketing grant awarded by the Community Transportation Association of America.
3. Produced marketing materials for the ticketing and transit systems, e.g. brochures, flyers and posters.

Estimated participants:

Sixteen information-training workshops were presented to local businesses and visitor service agencies throughout the region, e.g. Ilwaco Merchants Association, WA; Fort Stevens State Park, OR; KOA Campground in Hammond, OR; Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, OR and Portland Oregon Visitors Association, OR. There were about **220** participants attended these workshops.

Ridership of the new transit service was recorded to averaging about **450** visitors a day from June 14 through June 30, 2004. The number of visitors is expected to be higher for July and August. Projected numbers for summer 2004 range from an average of 650 to 750 visitors per day depending on the percentage growth from last summer.

Volunteer hours:

Hours recorded according to the volunteer who has entered the data collected from July, 2003 through June, 2004: **310** hours.

Work samples:

Samples are compiled in a slide show format. Please refer to the PowerPoint presentation. Hard copies are sent separately and include project-related news clips.